



U.S. centers on Jewish-Christian relations form coordinating council

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Other officers include Rabbi Barry D. Cytron, director of the Jay Phillips Center for Jewish-Christian Learning at St. Thomas University, St. Paul, Minnesota, vice chair, and Dr. Philip A. Cunningham, Executive Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College, secretary-treasurer. Also elected as members of the Board of Directors were Sister Lois Sculco of the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education at Seton Hill University, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and Dr. Racelle Weiman, director of the Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The meeting featured a conversation with two leading Jewish scholars with contrasting points of view about Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity, issued in 2000. Dr. David Berger, professor of history at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, representing an Orthodox point of view, charged that Dabru Emet, in stating flatly that "Jews and Christians worship the same God," ignored the centuries-old debate about whether Christians engage in "strange worship," i.e., the formal recognition or worship as God of an entity that is not God. Dr. Michael A. Signer, Abrams Professor in the Department of Theology of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, replied on behalf of the authors of Dabru Emet, characterizing it as an "initial statement" designed to initiate a dialogue within the Jewish community and to "offer a hand in friendship" towards Christians, without claiming to make definitive statements on all the topics dealt with. Also present at the meeting were liaison representatives from the Anti-Defamation League, the National Council of Synagogues, and the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as well as representatives from several European centers that will have "affiliate" status in the new Council. These include the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge, England; the Dialogue Group of Jews and Christians of the Central Committee of German Catholics; and the SIDIC Centre in Rome. The CCJR will become the 38th member organization of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

F.S.